

REMARKS

In response to the Official Action dated March 21, 2002, the specification has been amended to correct minor formal deficiencies, claims 1-14 have been canceled and new claims 15-30 have been added. Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested in light of the foregoing amendments and the remarks that follow.

The specification has been amended to insert the appropriate section headings, as suggested in the Office Action. The Applicants consent to use of the Abstract published as part of the International Application in the PCT Gazette, if the PTO prefers this text. It is believed that the application is in compliance with all formal requirements.

The rejection of original claims 1 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, par. 2, is rendered moot by cancellation of all of the original claims and replacement of those claims by newly drafted claims 15-30. The new claims have been drafted in more appropriate U.S. style format and are not believed to be narrowed with respect to the original claims. New claims 15-30 are believed to be free from the objections raised in the Office Action.

The rejection of original claims 1-14 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 based on the "admitted prior art" in Applicants' specification is also rendered moot by cancellation of the original claims. It is apparent from the rejection for indefiniteness given under Section 112 that the PTO was not able to fully understand the scope of the original claims. New claims 15-30 have removed any such ambiguities and are believed to clearly differentiate over the prior art structures that are described in the present specification.

None of the prior art structures described in the specification are characterized by a fiber composite section made up of some fiber layers that extend all the way through the transitional section into the connecting section and some fiber layers that extend only into the transitional section. Thus, the connecting section (b) is comprised of a composite of fiber layers and reinforcing layers, and the transitional section (c) comprises a structure in which, between the fiber layers which pass through the transitional section, (1) at least some of the reinforcement material layers in the connecting section extend into the transitional section and terminate at first termination points within the transitional section, (2) at least some of the fiber layers in the fiber composite section that do not pass through the transitional section extend into the transitional section and terminate at second

termination points within the transitional section, and (3) these layers extending into the transitional section abut against each other at the first and second termination points. Furthermore, Figure 6 of the drawings in the present application demonstrates the significant improvement in connection with tensile strength achieved by the structure disclosed and claimed according to the present invention, in comparison to structures according to the prior art described in the introductory portion of the present application.

Applicants also notice that the PTO is relying to at least some degree in its rejection upon the concept of "inherency." The CCPA and Federal Circuit have consistently pointed out that obviousness can only be predicated upon that which is known, and that which may be inherent is not necessarily known. In other words, "inherency" (that which is not disclosed by may be an unknown characteristic) is the antithesis of "obviousness" (requiring a positive concrete teaching or suggestion of the claimed invention). Inasmuch as the rejection is based on Section 103 for alleged obviousness, the reliance on "inherency" has no place in a properly grounded rejection.

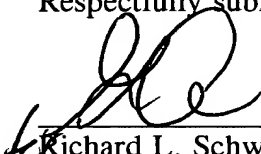
For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the newly added claims patentably distinguish the present invention from the prior art described in the introductory portion of the specification. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the stated rejection are respectfully requested as regards newly added claims 15-30.

Further and favorable action in the form of a Notice of Allowance of all claims is believed to be next in order, and such action is courteously solicited. If there remain any minor formal issues requiring attention, Examiner Rhee is invited to telephone the undersigned in order to expedite allowance of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

July 22, 2002

Date

 34371

Richard L. Schwaab
Registration No. 25,479

FOLEY & LARDNER
3000 K Street, N.W. Suite 500
Washington, D.C. 20007-5109
(202) 672-5300